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# Baking By Hand: Make The Best Artisanal Breads And Pastries Better Without A Mixer



## Synopsis

Make the Best Bread at Home with Just Your Hands Nothing beats the intoxicating smell of freshly baked bread. But what if you could create those beautiful artisan loaves in the most traditional way possible: with just your own two hands? Baking by Hand shows you how to do just that. Keep your mixer in the closet as Andy and Jackie King teach you long-forgotten methods that are the hallmarks of their exceptional bakery. They'll take you through all of the steps of making amazing bread, from developing your own sourdough culture, to mixing by hand, traditional shaping techniques and straight on to the final bake. Most importantly, you'll learn the Four-Fold technique-the key to making the kind of bread at home that will simply be top tier in any setting. In this book, Andy and Jackie feature their stand out bakery recipes, including favorites such as their North Shore Sourdough, a perfectly crusted and open-crumbed Ciabatta, and their earthy, healthy and wonderful Multigrain loaf. And that's only half the story. The Kings also offer up techniques and recipes for their much-loved pastries like Concord Grape Pies and Rhubarb-Ginger Tarts, combining seasonality, locality and a passion for fresh ingredients. And they're all ready for you to make-without a mixer. A&J King Artisan Bakers is located in Salem, Massachusetts, and was named one of America's 50 Best Bakeries by The Daily Meal.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm weary of this book because I've found continuity problems within the layout. On page 63, it tells you to reference pg 63 for the "final starter," yet, it isn't on that page. Looking through the index is no help, as they only list sections where "starters" can be found on pages 27-29, and 44-49; no

"page 63" in sight. I've found *The Bread Baker's Apprentice* to be more thorough, and easier to follow than this book. So if you're new to baking breads at home, this might not be the best book to start off with (especially with the complicated typos/errors within the book itself.)

I would describe myself as being a moderately experienced baker. However, I could never quite achieve the perfect loaf. I have tried about a half a dozen times to bake different types of loaves, but all failures. This book enabled me to bake not only a success, but bake what I consider to be the perfect loaf. If read from the beginning, it gives you a solid foundation for what you should be looking for throughout any of the recipes to be sure that you're on the right track. It goes through different niche products, why you may need them or not need them, what could be substituted for them, etc. It's not trying to sell you on anything. The book is written as a friend giving you the "low-down" on bread-making. There are some instances where tighter reviewing/editing would have done the book some good: some things are slightly not clear, pages direct to pages that may or not be helpful or have all the information you're expecting, etc. But the information is there. And more importantly, if read through (the beginning/intro at least), you gain knowledge so that things can be deduced. All in all, my first successful loaf was achieved with this book. I could not have hoped for a better read, or educational instructions. Thank you so much for this book.

It is so easy to follow the directions. The layout is wonderful. The tips and practices are clear. In short -too late I know - the only way you can get better than this is to have a kind and thoughtful master baker in your kitchen guiding your hands. So glad I bought this book.

The recipe instructions are confusing. For example, one sourdough recipe, the "North Shore" sourdough, has a "12 hours before baking day" step, then the "Sourdough Lover's" recipe instructs the baker to "give yourself an extra 12 hours for this one." Both sourdough recipes take the same amount of time, so I cannot see the "extra 12 hours." The hydration levels and flour amounts are way off, even for what one considers high hydration. The Pain Au Levain recipe on page 56 starts with a relatively dry levain. But the "Baking Day" final dough is over 75% Hydration and even considering the relatively low hydration levain that is added to the final dough, the overall mix requires over 8 oz of high gluten flour added just to get the dough to form into dough that can be folded or kneaded. Either the formulas contain typographical errors or the formulas have incorrect unit conversions from metric to standard. I could not tell. But they are clearly off based off my experience making these recipes using two digital scales and my own 100% hydration sourdough starter. The

other confusing aspect of the sourdough formulas is the assumption that the baker does not have a pre-existing starter, so the final dough formulas assume you are only using part of the levain for your final dough.

This is a lovely book with terrific recipes in it. However, the 4 fold method that they describe is simply impossible with several of the recipes as the dough's are very slack to almost pourable. I end up ending substantially more flour, and letting the dough rise for even longer. The end result is that several of these recipes take all of 6 hours or so (even in a warm kitchen on a summer day). The bread is indeed delicious, one can't help but wonder if there are mistakes in the recipes or if the authors failed to sufficiently test the recipes in a variety of areas. Peter Reinhart's recipes are easier to follow, the pictures match the appearance of the dough you create and the instructions match the slackness of the dough. This book uses the same boiler plate 4 fold technique instructions for almost every dough, which simply does not make sense. If the recipes were better tested I'd gladly give a 5 as everything I have made has been very tasty.

Got this as a gift along with *Baking Artisan Pastries & Breads: Sweet and Savory Baking for Breakfast, Brunch, and Beyond* - they've already taught me several invaluable lessons, and I was already a home baker. This has very clear, concise instructions that even someone who hasn't done much baking can follow. It will definitely take someone with a bit of baking experience to the next level, or give an incredible start to someone who is just venturing in to playing about with flour, water, and yeast!

I used to live within a 5 minute walk of A + J Bakery. I haven't bought bread from a grocery store in over 4 years, because it's just not comparable to the delicious breads from A + J. Every morning on the way to the train I would stop and get coffee and a croissant. If you're ever visiting Salem MA, stop in and grab a flying dutchman and any pastry. You will not regret it. When I moved out of state I was heartbroken to lose my favorite bakery, and this cookbook is my consolation. I don't know if I'll be able to get the same results as Andy and Jakie, but it's definitely worth trying. Their recipes are exceptional.

I made the sourdough bread from this book. The bread turned out alright but I was frustrated by the vague instructions. I ended up throwing out a bunch of sourdough starter or liquid sourdough since the author uses these terms to mean the same thing. I won't be making anything else from this

book. Instead I'll be using the Bread Bakers Apprentice.

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